

HEALTH

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INTERIM REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THE RURAL DISTRICT OF SHIFNAL FOR THE YEAR 1944.

Following the practice of the War Period the Ministry of Health has again directed that this Report shall be presented in an abbreviated interim form.

Compared with 1943 there was little change in the numbers of infectious diseases notified although there was greater variety in types. Scarlet Fever remained almost constant and it will be hoped that the slight decrease will be maintained. Diphtheria, after a complete year of absence, was notified in four instances but as three of these were confined to one household it may be said that the frequency was very slight. Measles and Whooping Cough were present in increasing numbers but in neither was there any approach to epidemic form. The numbers for Pneumonia were, however, more than halved.

The slight increase on the total of Tuberculosis was maintained but with the resettlement of population there may be readjustment.

The Birth Rate, under the Section on Vital Statistics, is shewn to be higher than for the Country generally with a good sprinkling of Illegitimate Births. On the other hand the Infantile Mortality is considerably below that prevailing and there were no deaths from Maternal Causes. The General Death Rate was below that for England and Wales.

On his work the Sanitary Inspector reports that

During the year the abatement of nuisances, the inspection of foodstuffs, Sewerage and drainage, and the maintenance of the system of refuse collection and disposal together with salvage collection, were the matters which have received the greatest attention. The inspection of cowsheds and dairies has also been carried on, but this has been limited

in its effectiveness by the present unsatisfactory state of the law and the fact that the new legislation passed by Parliament may, when it comes into force, take the control of milk production out of the hands of Local Authorities. Inspections under the Housing Acts have been carried out, but only to a very limited extent, as overcrowding is almost impossible to deal with owing to the lack of new houses. While repair of existing dwellings have been secured under the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936, (rather than the Housing Acts), owing to the very great difficulty in obtaining the labour and materials necessary to bring a house up to the standard required by the latter Acts. The very considerable increase in the cost of repairs since 1939 has also limited the amount of repair which the average landlord can reasonably be expected to carry out.

SECTION A:

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (In Acres).	39,600.
Registrar General's estimate of resident population.	9,513.
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1944) according to Rate Books.	2,574.
Rateable Value.	£69,913.
Sum represented by a penny rate.	£283. 10. 9d.
Persons per acre (calculated on population).	-24.

POPULATION:

The Registrar General has provided an Estimated Population and this is the basis for statistical calculation. However, locally, the decreased tempo of service needs and the return of evacuees, controlled and other, to their homes should reflect itself in the demand for accommodation in the permanent homes. In late years considerable advances have been made in the provision of General Services and with improved sanitation and an abundant Water Supply together with the expectation of a increased number of new houses the lot of the local residents should be greatly improved.



Extracts from Vital Statistics

Live Births.	Male.	Female.	Total.
Legitimate.	93.	101.	194.
Illegitimate.	6.	8.	14.
Totals:	99.	109.	208.

Birth Rate per 1,000 Estimated Population; 21.8.
 Birth Rate per 1,000 Estimated Population: 17.6.
 England and Wales.

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Still Births.			
Legitimate.	4.	3.	7.
Illegitimate.	-	-	-
Totals.	4.	3.	7.

Deaths.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Total Number of deaths.	45.	42.	87.
Death Rate per 1,000 Population.			9.1.
Death Rate per 1,000 Population.			11.6.
England and Wales.			

Infantile Mortality:

All Infants per 1,000 live births.	33.1.
All infants per 1,000 live births.	46.
England and Wales.	
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 live legitimate births.	30.9.
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 live illegitimate births.	71.
Total number of infant deaths. Legitimate.	6.
Illegitimate.	2.
Total.	7.

Deaths from :-

Cancer (all ages).	12.
Measles (all ages).	7.
Whooping Cough (all ages).	1.
Diarrhoea (under 2 years).	1.

Maternal Mortality :-

Under this heading there were no deaths.

Chief Causes of Deaths

Tuberculosis (all forms)	2.
Cancer.	12.
Intra Cranial Vascular Lesions.	11.
Heart Disease and Circulatory Disturbances.	26.
Respiratory Diseases.	8.
Premature Birth and Congenital Malformations.	5.
Violet Causes.	5.

SECTION B:

General Provision for Health Services in District.

AMBULANCE: The District continues to be served by the carriage acquired shortly before the beginning of the War. Driving and servicing have been the main difficulty. Surveying the larger area of the County the writer is of the opinion that the provision of such services in small units with parochial control is uneconomic and tends to inefficiency.

SECTION C - SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA:

113 Nuisances of all kinds have been dealt with and of these 95 have been successfully abated. Out of the total of 113 cases, only 15 had to be reported to the Council for official action to be taken, and on the service of Statutory notices for the abatement of nuisances under the provisions of Section 93, of the Public Health Act, 1936, the desired results were obtained in all but four instances.

A great variety of matters have been dealt with under this head, but in at least sixty per cent of the cases housing defects were dealt with.

SCAVENGING: The Sanitary Inspector reports the Parishes of Shifnal and Albrighton, together with the Council's Housing Estates in various parts of the District are served by a fortnightly collection for house refuse. This was maintained throughout the year.

Considerable difficulty has been experienced in maintaining a regular collection, partly because of mechanical failures in the motor vehicles, for which spare parts are extremely scarce, and partly owing to the lack of able bodied men to carry on the work. Two additional workmen were recruited to the Staff towards the end of the year, and an improvement in the service has thus been obtained. One of the vehicles has reached such age and condition that it will have to be replaced in the near future.

The Refuse Tip at Albrighton has been filled and up to the present time only one other suitable tipping place has been found. Negotiations with the owner have not produced satisfactory results. The refuse tip at Shifnal is also almost exhausted and determined efforts will have to be made to find new tipping ground for both areas. It seems advisable to try to obtain a tipping ground which would serve both Shifnal and Albrighton and also be large enough to accommodate the refuse from the whole of the District as it is hoped that scavenging will be extended to every Parish in the District in the immediate post-war years. The only alternative to this would be the provision of refuse incinerators and enquiries have also been made in this direction.

SALVAGE: Salvage collection has been combined with Refuse Collection in the more urbanised areas, but in the Parishes where Scavenging is not undertaken a special monthly salvage collection has been made. The Council received £218. 16. 7d. for salvage sold during the year. This shows a decline of £133. 3s. 5d. from the year 1943, when the figure was £352. Through the cooperation of the Salvage Stewards in the various Parishes and the active assistance given by the Women's Voluntary Service the yield per thousand of the population has been such that Shifnal R.D. has kept the lead amongst the Rural Districts of the County for the collection of Salvage during 9 months of the year.

A very successful book drive was held in March and this resulted in the target of 18,000 books set by the Ministry of Supply, being exceeded by 7,263, the total collected in the district being 25,263. The Forces received 12,365 Books, whilst 3,343 went to blitzed libraries etc., and 9,955 books which were unreadable were sent for salvage.

VERMIN INFESTATION:

Three houses were treated for fleas and two were treated for bug infestations. Both spraying and fumigation were used where either or both of these methods were applicable.

Infestations of rats and mice continue to be reported to the County Council and also the Ministry of Food, but happily the infestation of these pests is very slight in the district.

WATER SUPPLIES:

The Sanitary Inspector reports twenty-five chemical and twenty-five bacteriological samples of water were taken from water supplies in the District, and this includes both public and private supplies. The number of water supplies found unfit for domestic use was seven and of this number three have been replaced by services from the public mains. All public water supplies in the district are sampled regularly and none were found to be in any way unfit for human consumption. 56,453,000 gallons have been pumped to consumers through the public mains from the Council's borehole and pumping station at Stanton during the year. Shifnal and the surrounding area is supplied by the Council's public main, whilst in all the remaining parishes except one water is purchased in bulk from adjoining Authorities and supplied by public main to the houses. There are no public Swimming Baths in this Area.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL:

The Sanitary Inspector reports during the past 15 months the Sewage Disposal Works serving the village of Albrighton has been remodelled and considerably extended and although this plant is not yet complete, the additional sedimentation tanks, percolating filters and humus tanks, which have been added, have resulted in a very considerably improved effluent. Great care will have to be exercised in the manipulation of these Works as they are not yet large enough to fully serve the needs of the

village, and it is hoped that the Ministry of Health will permit the additional expenditure necessary for the completion of the work, otherwise deterioration of the plant already put down may result.

At Shifnal, Sewage Disposal is by broad irrigation, and the Sewage Works comprise $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of very low lying ground. Here the installation of a modern Sewage Works is long overdue, as the present system which includes sedimentation tanks is overloaded to several times its capacity. Owing to the fact that there is no proper access road to the sludge drying beds it is not possible to remove the large quantities of sludge which have accumulated there since the Plant was first constructed over 40 years ago. The removal of this sludge has now become a very urgent matter, as the sludge drying lagoons have nearly reached their maximum capacity and contain hundreds of tons of semi-fluid sludge which will have to be removed in order to keep the Works running properly.

A temporary Sewerage system has been installed at the village of Ryton, during the past few months. By relaying the drains which were previously used by the County Council, for road surface water, and connecting thereto as many of the house drains as the configuration of the ground would allow. This was connected to the main drain to a dissolved water tank which has been converted to a septic tank, by the insertion of baffles, and the addition of a stone filled contact filter and a soakaway drain. This has proved quite successful and function efficiently.

Several other small sewage plants serve Hamlets in the district and these receive regular attention and are functioning very well.

SECTION "D" - HOUSING:

A small number of housing inspections have been carried out but owing to the difficulties mentioned above under "Nuisances", action was taken under the Public Health Act, and in only one case was it necessary to take informal action on the lines laid down in the Housing Acts for the repair of a dwellinghouse. Four houses were found to be so dilapidated as to be completely incapable of being made fit for human habitation at reasonable expense and Demolition Orders were made by the Council. As a result of this, one house has been demolished, two dwellinghouses are closed and one is still occupied.

Four new houses have been erected in the district during the year.

SECTION "E" - INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD:

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS: Owing to centralised slaughtering all fresh meat supplies now come from the central abattoir at Newport, where carcasses are inspected before being sent out. A small pig slaughterhouse still continues, however, at Shifnal, where an average of approximately 23 pigs per week are slaughtered. The figures of meat and food condemned as being unfit for human consumption are as follows : -

Bacon.	604 lbs.	Canned jam.	57½ lbs.
89 Pigs heads.	1,296½ "	Meat.	355 "
7 Pigs livers.	73.	Fish.	173¾ "
6 carcasses.	1,266. "	Milk.	93 tins.
3 Bovine livers.	36. "	Beans.	53 lbs.
" carcasses.	125. "	Soups.	8 tins
(parts)		Dried Fruit.	403 lbs.
		Fresh Fruit.	48 lbs.
		Bread.	300 loaves.

MILK AND DAIRIES:

Dairies and cowsheds are visited at frequent intervals. In cases where faults have been found the necessary improvements have been obtained by informal means such as the serving of printed notices, setting out the Council's requirements and asking for the co-operation of the milk purveyor in having the necessary work done within a specified time.

The co-operation of farmers and dairymen is readily given in nearly every case, and the law regarding milk production and distribution is in need of drastic overhaul and until this is done and the whole system of inspection has a surer foundation on which to work no great improvement can be expected.

SECTION "F" - INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

Prevalence of, and control over, infectious and allied diseases

The following table gives the number of cases of infectious diseases notified during the year together with the number of deaths from such diseases : -

<u>Disease.</u>	<u>Cases notified.</u>		<u>Deaths.</u>
	<u>1943.</u>	<u>1944.</u>	
Scarlet Fever.	24.	21.	-
Diphtheria.	--	4.	-
Whooping Cough.	--	37.	1.
Measles.	71.	106.	-
Pneumonia.	16.	7.	-
Acute Poliomyelitis.	-	1.	-
Puerperal Pyrexia.	4.	2.	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum.	-	3.	-

Incidence of disease in the various age-groups.

<u>Years.</u>	<u>Scarlet Fever.</u>		<u>Diphtheria.</u>		<u>Whooping Cough.</u>		<u>Measles.</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female.</u>
-	-	-	-	-	1.	2.	-	1.
1.	-	3.	1.	-	6.	3.	6.	6.
3.	1.	1.	1.	-	4.	1.	19.	21.
5.	5.	3.	1.	-	7.	9.	16.	3.
10.	-	4.	1.	-	-	3.	19.	8.
15.	-	3.	-	-	-	-	-	-
25.	-	1.	-	-	-	1.	2.	2.

PNEUMONIA:

<u>Years.</u>	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>
-	-	-
5.	1.	1.
15.	1.	-
45.	1.	3.
65.	-	-

SCABIES:

The Matron at Newport reports that during the year there were treated one in-patient and twelve out-patients with a total of 24 Treatments. The Matron has been awarded the Distinguished War Service Certificate of the Red Cross for her work in the treatment of Scabies.

Annual return submitted to the Ministry of Health for the period ending 31st. December, 1944. was as follows:-

	Age under 5 yrs but under 1 yr	5 yrs and over but under 15.	Total.
Number of children (including temporary residents) who completed the full course of immun- isation up to 31 Dec.1944.	52.	4.	56.
Approximate estimated number of children in the Authority's area at 31st. December, 1944.	707.	1715.	2422.
Percentage of child popul- ation considered to be immunised on 31st. Dec.1944.	47.4%	70.4%	

The clinical side of the Scheme for Diphtheria Prophylaxis continued to be administered by the County Health Department. A limited number of children continued to be treated by their Private Doctor.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The number of notified cases on the Register at 31st. December, 1944, and the comparative figures for 1943 and 1942 are as follows :-

	<u>MALES.</u>		<u>FEMALES.</u>		<u>TOTAL.</u>
	<u>Pulmonary</u>	<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>	<u>Pulmonary</u>	<u>Non Pulmonary</u>	
1944:	16.	22.	23.	30.	91.
1943:	16.	22.	20.	29.	87.
1942:	13.	21.	20.	27.	81.

<u>New cases notified during the year.</u>		
<u>Pulmonary.</u>	<u>Non-Pulmonary.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
6.	2.	8.

<u>DEATH RATES:</u>	<u>Shifnal.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>
Death Rate for Pulmonary. Tuberculosis per 1,000 population.	.21.	<u>1943.</u> .5
Death Rate-Non-Pulmonary per 1,000 population.	-	.1.
Total Death Rate (all forms).	.21.	.61.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY 1944:

Age Group	<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary.</u>	
Years.	M	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0-5	-	-	-	1.	-	-	-	-
5-15	-	-	1.	-	-	-	-	-
15-25.	1.	-	-	-	1.	-	-	-
25-35.	1.	2.	-	-	-	1.	-	-
35-45.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45-55.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55-65.	1.	1.	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL:	3.	3.	1.	1.	1.	1.	-	-

CANCER - The number of deaths from Cancer in 1944 was 12 (6 Males and 6 Females):

DEATH RATE per 1,000,000 living = 1,261.
England & Wales 1943. 1,723.

15th. October, 1945.

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